

Improving ACI 301 by Public Discussion

Have you ever written a letter or a memo, put it aside for a week, then re-read it? Did it still make sense? Ward and I have written many articles but we hate to re-read them after they are published. Why? We find sentences that could have been better written and we find sentences we don't understand, but thought we did when we wrote them.

The same is true when an ACI committee works long and hard in putting out a document. ACI 301 "Standard Specifications for Structural Concrete" is an important document that provides jobsite directives to the contractor. Because of this, contractors owe it to themselves, and to all the hard working committee members of ACI 301 to review and improve the document.

Public discussion of the latest ACI 301 revision will begin on September 8 and will close October 23. ACI 301-10 was more than 80 pages long, and the new version is expected to be a bit longer. Yes, it might not be possible to review and comment on the whole document, but what about picking a section of interest to you? That can be a huge help to ACI 301. And although ACI has a special review format for your comments, if you send your comments to Ward or me by October 20 we'll put them in the special format and forward them to ACI.

When Ward and I write, we often assume some background for the reader that may be in error, or know what we want to say but sometimes forget that there might be other interpretations or better ways of expressing our ideas so they can't be misunderstood. Thus we typically have an additional reader who is not as invested in the publication as we are to give it a final review.

Public discussion is an especially important step in improving ACI standards such as codes and specifications. It is a chance for those not involved in the writing process to comment on their interpretations of the requirements and to fully understand the committee's intent. If we all understand it in the same way, it is unlikely that the requirements will be misinterpreted in the field. And that's the goal. Misinterpretations lead to change orders, disputes, delays, and cost increases that benefit no one on the construction team.

Here are the ACI 301-10 sections, which should parallel those in the revised specification. Think about reviewing just one section and sending us your comments. Everyone, including ACI Committee 301, will benefit from ASCC's participation.

Section 1	General requirements
Section 2	Formwork and formwork accessories
Section 3	Reinforcement and reinforcement supports
Section 4	Concrete mixtures
Section 5	Handling, placing, and constructing
Section 6	Architectural concrete
Section 7	Lightweight concrete
Section 8	Mass concrete
Section 9	Post-tensioned concrete
Section 10	Shrinkage-compensating concrete
Section 11	Industrial floor slabs
Section 12	Tilt-up construction
Section 13	Precast structural concrete
Section 14	Precast architectural concrete Notes to Specifier